



# OSWER Innovations Pilot

## *Unidocs Hazardous Materials Online Inventory Reporting Project*

---

*The Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) initiated a series of innovative pilots to test new ideas and strategies for environmental and public health protection. A small amount of money is set aside to fund creative approaches to waste minimization, energy recovery, recycling, land revitalization, and homeland security that may be replicated across various sectors, industries, communities, and regions. We hope these pilots will pave the way for programmatic and policy recommendations by demonstrating the environmental and economic benefits of creative, innovative approaches to the difficult environmental challenges we face today.*

---

### BACKGROUND

In 1994, Santa Clara County, California established a process to standardize many of the procedures within the county related to the management of hazardous materials and hazardous wastes. In 1999, the Unidocs Hazardous Materials Online Inventory Project (HMOIP) ([www.unidocs.org](http://www.unidocs.org)) was created to improve the effectiveness of fire prevention and local hazardous materials and waste programs. This e-government system functions as a business-to-government reporting tool, a source of validated data for state agencies, and an emergency response tool that can be used by local fire departments, the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), and the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC). Unidocs is currently supported by numerous local emergency response agencies, industry, environmental health agencies, and state regulatory agencies throughout Santa Clara, Sonoma, Santa Rosa, Marin and Newark Counties.

Hazardous materials reporting is generally either by hard copy submission or in electronic flat file format.

### PILOT APPROACH

The Santa Clara County Department of Environmental Health, Santa Clara County Fire Chiefs Association, U.S. EPA Region 9, and U.S. EPA Office of Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (OEPPR) will expand the existing online hazardous materials reporting system to other areas of the region and add additional parameters to facilitate reviewing and manipulating the

data.

This project will be performed in two phases. Phase I will integrate the Computer Aided Management Emergency Operations (CAMEO), chemical database information into the existing Unidocs chemical database. CAMEO contains a chemical database of over 6,000 hazardous chemicals, 80,000 synonyms, and product trade names. CAMEO provides a powerful search engine that allows users to find chemicals instantly. Each one is linked to chemical-specific information on fire and explosive hazards, health hazards, firefighting techniques, cleanup procedures, and protective clothing. Adding the CAMEO chemical information to the Unidocs system will provide industry and emergency responders instant internet access to a highly credible source of chemical response handling information directly from the same system they use for reporting and emergency response planning. Phase II will include the enhancement of the existing database search, sort, and report functions for emergency response planning, hard copy reporting, and overall testing by specified industry and agency users.

### INNOVATION

Hazardous materials reporting is generally either by hard copy submission or in electronic flat file format. Use of this information by emergency response agencies is limited by the current submission formats. An easy to use, web-based submission and analysis tool would enable local, state, and federal agencies to more easily analyze the data and improve chemical emergency

prevention, planning, and response.

Unidocs combines the need for industry to access guidance in meeting reporting requirements with the need for agencies to manage the reported data usefully. The pilot will promote the concept to new industry and agency users, facilitate the reporting process for industry, and create significant new data management opportunities for agencies. This project will enable business and industry from the other Region 9 states to realize the benefits of the online capabilities of Unidocs at no cost or a small user fee. EPA envisions this pilot as a precursor to a national online reporting tool currently supported by local emergency response agencies and regulated industries.

## **BENEFITS**

The Unidocs system allows responders and other authorized agency staff to perform several activities that will improve emergency response and planning. Instant searches can be conducted to determine sites that use or store a particular hazardous material. Results of these searches are linked to facility inventories so the viewer can see the quantity of material as well as the rest of the facility chemical inventory for each site. Uploaded site maps will allow emergency responders to locate chemical storage and handling areas and other facility specific information. This project will create new opportunities to exchange information among many agencies and will create new opportunities for businesses, consultants, and local agencies to participate. It will enhance emergency response capabilities and provide critical homeland security information to authorized personnel that are not currently shared among agencies while maintaining security for non-public information such as site plans and facility maps.

## **CONTACTS**

Kim Jennings, EPA (202) 564-7998

For additional information, visit the EPA OSWER Innovations web site at: [www.epa.gov/oswer/iwg](http://www.epa.gov/oswer/iwg)